

19 August 2021

Digital Platforms Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
By email to digitalmonitoring@accc.gov.au

Dear ACCC

Digital Platform Services Inquiry – Online retail marketplaces issues paper (July 2021)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the operation of online retail marketplaces. As outlined in previous submissions to the Digital Platforms Inquiry, I support clear external dispute resolution pathways for all users of digital platforms.

Online retail marketplaces facilitate purchases and many of these transactions are covered by existing consumer protections and external complaint resolution pathways. For example, complaints about the purchase of goods may fall under the remit of consumer affairs and fair trading bodies.

As well as facilitating purchases, online retail marketplaces offer services and solutions for users of their platform. It is not clear whether complaints about these aspects would be covered by existing protections. Such complaints could arise, for example, from disputes about the administration of accounts or privacy breaches. The ACCC could consider whether complaints that are not captured by existing pathways would benefit from inclusion in a unified, industry-based redress scheme for complaints about digital platform services, as previously recommended by the ACCC.¹

As set out in my submission to the Treasury on the Digital Platforms Inquiry,² my office is well positioned to incorporate handling of complaints about digital platforms. In relation to online marketplaces, we have the infrastructure and expertise required to handle certain complaints as we already handle complaints about payment disputes, contract disputes, scams, and misleading advertisements in the telecommunications sector. The OAIC also recognises the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman as an External Dispute Resolution scheme to handle privacy complaints.

Importantly, my office already handles complaints from both individuals and small businesses. Both individuals and small businesses could be sellers or other users who have accounts and contractual relationships with online marketplaces.

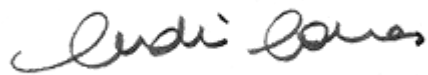
¹ [Digital Platforms Inquiry – Final Report \(June 2019\)](#), recommendations 22 and 23

² [Submission from the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman to the Treasury's consultation on the final Digital Platforms Inquiry Report \(September 2019\)](#)

My office is also well placed to work with existing agencies as appropriate. We already follow a 'no wrong door' approach and could refer buyers or sellers to the right place as needed.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and I look forward to the Inquiry's findings.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judi Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judi Jones
Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman

